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CU III - 98/11

TELCON  
Secretary  
Ball, Alex Johnson  
1/5/63, 4:00 p.m.

Ball - There is one thing that I wanted to clear up and that was did you talk to the Boss about the Cuba business--the Pan American flights?

Secretary - Yes.

Ball - Is he for it or against it?

Secretary - He doesn't mind if we try to work this out with the prisoners.

Ball - All right. Alex is going to get on.

Secretary - We don't want to do it on the basis of any direct deal because the basis of opening up the flights would be for our reasons. On the other hand to see if Donovan cannot spring these other fellows on the basis of economic possibilities. Did you see the papers on the subject?

Johnson - Yes, I did.

Secretary - John McCone was down. If he is back in Washington you might want to talk to him about it.

Johnson - He was there when you were talking about it?

Secretary - Yes. What was your idea about timing, Alex?

Johnson - The timing is the problem. The Swiss were at us again this morning. They have had some more riots down there. We have got three problems--we have got the Cubans who have visas who want to get out. We have the Americans who are not imprisoned who want to get out. We have the Americans who are imprisoned. Castro has said that he will let the Americans go--those who are around who are not in jail--and apparently he is willing to let the Cubans go. These Cubans are in bad shape. They had to give up their property and do all this when they got their visas, and now they haven't been able to go. These are the people that are rioting around the Swiss Embassy down there. And then there is the American prisoner question.

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Secretary - I think you had better decide exactly how and when and then just ring him back on that. The general idea of doing it is all right provided it is not simply the responsibility of Castro but that it is done in a way to make it for our own purpose.

Johnson - I get the point. I will go ahead on that and then we had better let him know how we are planning to do it.

Secretary - If McCone is back in town, talk to him about it.

Johnson - Did you talk about economic sanctions, any of that business?

Secretary - I left with him the paper on the OAS stuff.

Johnson - Fine.